

Week Ending November 12, 2004

NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service Weekly Statewide Influenza Activity Summary

New Jersey's Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) activity statewide surveillance is still at the level of "No Activity" (no culture confirmed cases) although we had three antigen positive rapid tests, that showed no sign of growth as per the New Jersey Public Health Environmental Laboratory. This trend of "No Activity" has been the same in the state since the beginning of the flu season.

The surveillance parameters are within the same baseline, when compared with the same period last season. A few of the county percentage parameters showed figures well above the total average (see 09Nov04 Pdf table), but should not be interpreted as an increased level of activity since the denominator is very small.

This week the NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service has not been notified of any out break or increased activity in any of the facilities throughout the state, and the sum of all the data collected from the entire surveillance activities reconfirms the " NO ACTIVITY" level this week.

A few states New York, Connecticut, Indiana, Delaware and Ohio, have reported different levels of increased activity, which were based upon laboratory culture confirmed cases, and most have been influenza A, H3N2 Fujian-like strain.

Reports from long-term care facilities of influenza-like illness since the season began remains around 1.20% to 1.58% range. No facility has reported any laboratory-confirmed cases.

Rates of school absenteeism and emergency department reports have all remained stable. Hospital laboratory surveillance for respiratory syncytial virus (often clinically indistinguishable from influenza virus infection) is starting to show an upward trend as we move deeper into the season.

Influenza virus infection itself is not a clinical or laboratory reportable disease according to N.J.A.C. 8:57. Accordingly, activity levels must be extrapolated from weekly monitoring activities of healthcare facilities and providers dispersed around the state.

The NJDHSS Communicable Disease Service continues to communicate with health care providers throughout the state, on how to accommodate the influenza vaccine shortage that the nation is facing. Working closely with both our national and local partners, NHDHSS continues efforts to locate available vaccine, and to target distribution to those at greatest risk.